WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

TOBACCO ALERT

WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY 1994 ■ SPECIAL ISSUE

THE MEDIA AND TOBACCO: GETTING THE HEALTH MESSAGE ACROSS

WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY

ADVISORY KIT 1994

WHO SUPPORT FOR WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY, 31 MAY 1994

"The media and tobacco: getting the health message across"

The following information has been compiled to support the celebration of **World No-Tobacco Day**. It suggests activities to help promote communication with the media in order to get the tobacco control message across.

These activities will, of course, need to be adapted to the culture and style of each country and to the cultural, social and economic conditions of each society. They may stimulate other ideas and contribute to the success of **World No-Tobacco Day 1994**. For this reason there is no copyright on the material produced by WHO and, subject to agreement on the design of graphic material, it can be freely reproduced or modified to bear specific names of countries, organizations, towns or associations, giving credit to WHO.

The advisory kit for World No-Tobacco Day, 31 May 1994, contains the following:

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In addition ...

The World Health Organization intends to produce the following items as background material for the seventh **World No-Tobacco Day**: a press kit containing articles, a cartoon sheet, a sticker, a poster, and an order form for a video.

If you are interested in any of these materials,
please send your order to the WHO contact point in your region,
which you will find in the list on page 24 of this kit.

MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY 1994

"The media and tobacco: getting the health message across"

Information is an essential component of any public health programme. The battle against smoking provides a good illustration of the unique and fundamental role the media can play in making the general public aware of the harmful effects of a high-risk behaviour. The media can be particularly effective in persuading nonsmokers not to adopt this habit and encouraging smokers to give it up.

The commitment of the media to support tobacco control activities is thus decisive, not just to make people more conscious of health in their everyday life but also to back legal measures, particularly bans on advertising, and any other initiatives aimed at countering the image of smoking as socially acceptable behaviour. In all countries of the world, to varying degrees, the media have a privileged relationship with political decision-makers and also act as spokesmen for public opinion.

It is true that the dissemination of information on the dangers of smoking will not suffice to make this practice miraculously disappear. Legislative and educational measures, coordinated by all the social actors and applied simultaneously, are needed to achieve this objective. However, public information is the first and most important of the measures available to us for combatting tobacco use.

In the face of the worldwide offensive by the tobacco industry, backed by substantial funding, those leading the fight against smoking often have great difficulty in making themselves heard. By joining forces with them the media are in a position to give the tobacco control message the full resonance and credibility it deserves. They can also help keep the public constantly aware of the dangers of tobacco use. All those involved in this struggle, however, must work closely with the media so that the latter are able to communicate effectively with their audience.

In the developing countries, which are the targets of the tobacco multinationals' current offensive, the situation is quite different. Various factors are inducing greater numbers of people to smoke, such as increased purchasing power, women's emancipation and the entry into the labour market of a new generation of young people who have been subjected to heavy cigarette advertising. Therefore, it is all the more important that the media should play their key role as agents for information and social change.

We in WHO trust that, following this World No-Tobacco Day, the remainder of the year will be a time for us to work out together the best way to use public information to support the battle against smoking, a battle that each of us can wage in our own way and in our own environment.

Pooling of ideas with representatives of the media will make it possible to develop communication strategies adapted to the sociocultural context of different communities. It will afford an opportunity to bring together all the public figures concerned and thus ensure that the needs of all parties are taken into account.

Media support in disseminating lessons learned and uniting people's efforts worldwide is becoming ever more important to achieving success in our struggle against tobacco use, the most harmful of all the man-made epidemics. ❑

WHAT IS WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY?

In view of the scientifically proven risks to health that smoking causes, not only for smokers but also for nonsmokers exposed to other people's smoke, WHO has committed itself to fighting this menace.

World No-Tobacco Day, held on 31 May each year, is intended to encourage governments, communities, groups and individuals to become aware of the problem and to take appropriate action.

To help them in this task, WHO suggests a well-defined theme for thought and action each year.

In 1993, stress was laid on the role of health services and personnel and the need for the latter both to set an example and to act as educators under the slogan "Health services: our window to a tobacco-free world".

In 1994, the aim is to draw the attention of everyone involved to the role of the media in the tobacco control campaign. The theme of this **World No-Tobacco Day** is therefore *"The media and tobacco: getting the health message across"*. ❑

PREPARATIONS FOR WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY

It may be useful to ask the following questions:

◆ 1. What is our purpose in organizing this event?

◆ 2. How can we attract the widest attention and achieve optimum participation?

◆ 3. What media representatives — from the press, radio and television — should we contact right now to tell them about the activities planned for **World No-Tobacco Day**?

◆ 4. What promotional items should we have made to support the message.T-shirts, posters, bags, letters ..... ?

◆ 5. How can people prominent in public life, political decision-makers, health personnel, teachers and show business or sports personalities, be encouraged to join us and the media in making **World No-Tobacco Day 1994** an unparalleled success?

◆ 6. What specific testimony could these well-known people give on this occasion so as to give the messages greater appeal?

◆ 7. How could the media help with advance publicity for **World No-Tobacco Day**?

◆ 8. How can the media be persuaded to make the maximum commitment to support the Day's events?

◆ 9. How can we plan sustained action after **World No-Tobacco Day** and encourage the media to publish regular articles on smoking and health? How can we help them to meet the expectations of their audience?

◆ 10. What lessons can we learn from the experience of this exceptional dialogue with the media in order to improve the outcome of future **World No-Tobacco Days**?

THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY: STRATEGIES AND PROSPECTS

Falling tobacco consumption in the industrialized countries, especially in North America, the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries, is encouraging the multinationals to step up their efforts aimed at the developing countries in order to replace these dwindling markets. Their penetration is made easier by the fact that many developing countries as yet have no legislation on tobacco control and have not undertaken any specific public education or information programme in this area. Moreover, most of these countries have strong economic dependence on tobacco at one level or another. They are therefore all the more vulnerable when struck by the familiar consequences of the economic recession.

Political and commercial pressures

To support their penetration of these markets, the multinationals have no qualms about employing a variety of techniques to oblige the public authorities to open up their national markets to foreign cigarettes. Very often, they ask their own powerful governments to back up their political and commercial approach. Economic pressure is then used as a form of reprisal against exports of goods from these countries. Such reprisals have been taken, for example, against Korea and Thailand. Even Japan has not been spared from these methods. Whereas, until recent times, its market was almost entirely national, the international tobacco companies managed to conquer 16% of the Japanese market by 1990.

Creating economic dependence

Another expansion technique used by the multinational tobacco companies in an increasing number of developing countries is to set up a local factory. This policy enables them to compete with national production, to undermine the monopolies and to reinforce market penetration by creating economic dependence on tobacco. Recent examples include China, where a foreign company has invested US $ 21 million in the local manufacture of 7000 million cigarettes a year. This country is the market most coveted by the tobacco multinationals, with fast-growing consumption currently estimated at 1.6 trillion cigarettes a year. Over 300 million Chinese smoke, accounting for 30% of world cigarette consumption.

With the advent of the multinationals, many of these countries, which were originally limited and controlled national markets with traditionally rural consumption and no advertising, have, in the course of just a few years, found themselves the targets of an aggressive commercial offensive backed up by large financial resources. The countries of Eastern Europe, traditionally supplied by local production, are now being invaded by foreign cigarettes, supported by advertising of all kinds. One company recently invested US $ 200 million in modernizing the national cigarette factory of Kazakhstan, Almaty Tobacco Kombinat, acquiring 49% of the shares. This holding is expected to reach 90% by the end of 1994, bringing the level of production to 20 billion cigarettes, approximately the country's annual consumption. For the company concerned, this initiative is a springboard to the former Soviet republics.

The strategy of the multinationals, which was tested in the 1980s in Asia and is now expanding rapidly in the countries of Eastern Europe, can be described in four stages, according to Dr Judith Mackay of the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control:

- **Courtship: foreign companies dazzle the monopolies with offers of help**

  The multinationals first adopted a policy of "goodwill" towards Eastern Europe: they showed concern for local problems and offered solutions in order to offset the lack of efficacy and technology of an obsolete tobacco industry that was entirely in State hands.

- **Marriage: joint ventures or the formation of subsidiaries, accompanied by sophisticated advertising**

  This "goodwill" policy was just the first step towards achieving the multinationals' objectives: obtaining commercial contracts and setting up joint ventures. The list of commercial contracts concluded with the former state monopolies of Eastern Europe is truly impressive. In 1990, the tobacco mulfinationals and the former monopolies wooed each other. In most of these countries, marriage followed in 1992/1993.

- **Deterioration of the marriage: the multinationals accuse monopolies of preventing free market access**

  The companies know that they will not make any immediate profits in Eastern Europe. For them, the potential profits are in the longer term.

- **Divorce: collapse of national monopolies**

  In the former Soviet Union, for example, the tobacco multinationals have bought up half the existing cigarette production in less than two years. By 1995, this market is expected to be entirely in private hands.

Source: *Smoking Prevention*, BASP Newsletter No. 20, March 1993.

Finally, cigarette smuggling is also used here and there to penetrate markets, particularly in Africa, in order to encourage local demand, produce profits and compete illegally with national production in order to jeopardize its viability.

An aggressive commercial offensive

The commercial approach tends to glorify the most egotistical aspects of the Western lifestyle, such as success, social advancement, seduction, virility and personal beauty, in an idealized and misleading manner. Sponsorship of sporting and cultural events, donations to hospitals and schools, scholarships, organization of competitions for young people, are all intended to get as many people as possible, but especially young people and the political authorities, to support their strategy. Free cigarettes and free discotheque tickets are handed out in exchange for empty cigarette cartons in order to get young people hooked on tobacco. The marketing of specific cigarettes for women and of clothing and other everyday products bearing the logo of a cigarette brand, and various similar gimmicks, is becoming more and more common in the developing world. In order to improve the appeal of their pro-tobacco messages, some of these multinationals even go so far as to purchase public transport

companies. In some capitals of developing countries, buses or trams are used to promote leading cigarette brands.

Effects on overall cigarette consumption

The results show the effectiveness of the methods used to persuade the populations of these countries to adopt smoking behaviour. Significant examples of the effects of this strategy on consumption include:

In Japan, consumption used to be falling, but is now growing by 3% a year. Fourteen per cent of women are current smokers.

In Argentina, the use of tobacco was rising by 2.4% in the 1960s. Since the penetration of the tobacco multinationals, it has been increasing annually by 6.4%.

By the year 2000, WHO predicts a continuing decline in tobacco consumption in North America and Australia, a lesser decline in Europe, and a sharp and constant increase in Africa and Asia.

In developing countries as diverse as Malaysia, Mauritius, the Philippines and Tunisia, almost 50% of men smoke on average compared with about 25-30% in Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Nevertheless, smoking is more prevalent in other industrialized countries, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe.

The social and financial consequences for these countries in terms of health expenditure and loss of economic production because of absence for illness and disabilities are likely to have a serious adverse effect on their potential, which is already under heavy strain. Obviously, many of them do not have the resources to meet the additional costs produced by the effects of tobacco use. These expected long-term consequences invalidate the immediate economic arguments for setting up local manufacturing plants.

The world tobacco market is dominated by six multinational companies. One of them has managed to set up 10 plants in Africa, 13 in Latin America and 8 in Asia, while another company is already established in 37 developing countries.

These multinationals, which control the majority of the free world market in tobacco, enjoy an economic oligopoly. Whereas the developing countries account for 63% of world production and 80% of the land devoted to growing tobacco, these countries exert only a very marginal influence on the marketing process.

While some of the multinationals do have local branches, the strategic decisions on general economic policy and on the tobacco market are always taken by the parent companies, based in the industrialized countries.

The world strategy of the tobacco multinationals is therefore a major obstacle to setting up effective public health policies against smoking.

A ray of hope: Hong Kong, Singapore ...

Nevertheless, as a result of very energetic smoking control measures and activities, encouraging results have been achieved in Hong Kong and Singapore, where in a few years the percentage of smokers among the population has fallen from 23% to 15%. In the face of the ambition of the tobacco industry, which sees Asia "as an unlimited market comparable to space", this trend offers a ray of hope. In Asia, 9 of the 15 countries concerned have already launched smoking control programmes in one form or another. ❑

TRENDS IN THE LEVEL AND IMPACT OF TOBACCO CONSUMPTION: FACTS AND FIGURES

Per capita tobacco consumption is tending to decline in the industrialized countries. Between 1992 and 2000, consumption is forecast to decline by about 15% in the United States of America and Canada and over 2% in the countries of northern Europe. Consumption should also begin to decline in other European countries.

Per capita cigarette consumption in some developed countries is falling, but in the developing world as a whole, it is rising, not just among men but also among women.

In the world as a whole, over 3 million deaths a year (6% of the world total) are caused by tobacco, more deaths than are caused by all psychoactive substances together.

One-third of young adults tend to become regular smokers in the industrialized countries, which leads to the premature death of a good number of them between ages 35 and 69. If this trend continues, over 10% of the 120 million young people who attain adulthood each year will die prematurely because of the use of tobacco (half in middle age, half in old age).

Smoking is already responsible for 30% of all cancers in the developed countries (including cancer of the lung, oral cavity, larynx, oesophagus, bladder, pancreas and kidney). And this does not include the high death rate from other diseases associated with tobacco consumption: heart disease, stroke, emphysema or other pulmonary infections, aortic aneurysm or peptic ulcer.

Generally speaking, in the countries where smoking has long been practised, tobacco is now responsible for about one-third of all deaths in men aged 35 to 69 years, who on average lose 23 years of life.

The time-lag between the cause and the effects of tobacco consumption often leads people to underestimate the dangers of smoking. However, in some developing countries where smoking has become very prevalent, the incidence of hypertension and myocardial infarction has become almost as high as in the industrialized countries.

In China alone, where total cigarette consumption increased by a staggering 7% per year during the last decade, by the 2000s more than 2 million will die annually from tobacco-related diseases. These predictions could be even more appalling if the promotion of cigarettes continues as energetically as at present. ❑

THE MEDIA AND THE TOBACCO CONTROL MOVEMENT: FRUITFUL COLLABORATION

Thanks to the media, the positive image of the nonsmoker is gradually asserting itself. The concept of the social acceptability of smoking is beginning to lose ground in more and more countries. The fruitful collaboration between the media and the tobacco control movement can be illustrated by many examples. First of all, the encouraging results achieved in reducing consumption in various countries where nationwide press campaigns have been conducted should be emphasized. Such initiatives, allied to other smoking control measures, have proved beneficial in Canada, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Australia and Switzerland, to give just a few examples.

■ A project intended to support smokers who want to stop was successfully launched in Finland in 1986 with the support of national television. Three years later a new programme was launched in collaboration with the neighbouring country of Estonia. This project benefited substantially from an encouraging experiment promoted in North Karelia in 1985. Thanks to the involvement of the health services in the field and the active participation of the media, about 250 out of 31 000 daily smokers in this province of 175 000 inhabitants agreed to follow the television broadcasts in order to break the smoking habit. This assistance by the media was then publicized in order to support a national programme through a series of broadcasts and to gain wider participation. Candidates were asked to stop smoking for at least two weeks. The winner received a prize such as a week's holiday in Hawaii for two. Simultaneously, a variety of activities were promoted so as to encourage the community to become involved in the project. Surveys demonstrated that 46% of the adult population saw at least one session on television, and 20% saw two sessions or more. Participation was highest in North Karelia. This initiative forms part of a group of measures intended to reduce the death rate from heart disease. It is pointed out that North Karelia, which 20 years ago had the highest death rate from heart disease in the world, has managed to cut the rate by half by means of extensive information programmes on the benefits of a healthy life without tobacco and allied to an appropriate diet. The proportion of male smokers in the province has also declined, from 50% to about one-third. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of Finns have stopped smoking and the habits of smokers have changed.

■ In Papua New Guinea, the local newspaper has launched a supplement devoted to health education. By means of advertising revenue from pharmaceutical companies, this supplement

was published for distribution with the newspaper. Another version without advertising was distributed to health professionals throughout the country. Because of the high prevalence of smoking in the country, prominence has been given to the adverse effects of this habit on the population's health.

Another example of fruitful collaboration between the media and the tobacco control movement is the decision by various newspapers around the world to refuse cigarette advertising on their own initiative.

■ In the United States of America, 12 newspapers including *The Seattle Times* have already taken this decision. The management of *The Seattle Times* justified this standpoint by stating: "We want our columns to be as open as they can be. This is a legal product, of course. But the medical evidence at this point was irrefutable: on cancer, on heart disease ... We just couldn't in conscience be a part of it any more".

■ In Canada, before certain major media decided to refuse tobacco advertising, the promoters of the tobacco control movement gave prominence to the fact that such advertising compromised the editorial integrity of newspapers. Mr Garfield Mahood, Executive Director of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association in Canada, put it as follows: "The minute you get tobacco out of the newspapers, the difference in their editorials is striking. Overnight they become advocates. It's hard to do that when your editorial or news story is printed on the back of a full-page spot for [...] cigarettes".

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), moreover, has reacted against European newspaper editors who oppose a ban on the advertising of tobacco products because they see such a ban as a violation of freedom of speech and a threat to press freedom. The IFJ made its position known at a press conference in Brussels on 27 March 1992 :

■ In an advertisement published in several newspapers, European editors put forward the view that restrictions on advertising amounted to treating journalists as "big children" and consumers as "innocent babes". It seems that the so-called "big children" are more concerned by the ambiguous relations between advertising and the press than by the restrictions on advertising.

Journals or magazines devoted to the battle against smoking have been launched in a number of countries. Examples are *Luftwege* in Germany and the journal *Tobacco Control* published by the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

The media are therefore powerful allies of the promoters of nonsmoking worldwide. The success of the campaigns undertaken in many countries at their prompting, bears witness to the fruitful collaboration by the media, who are essential partners in any effective public health policy for a tobacco-free environment. ❑

THE MEDIA: THE PREREQUISITES FOR SUCCESS

In order to arouse the media's interest in the fight against tobacco use, they need first of all to be supplied with information that will help them respond as well as possible to the needs of their audience in this area.

Epidemiological data on the prevalence of smoking, medical reports on the impact of tobacco on the death rate and the results of various motivation surveys are all sources of information that can motivate media coverage in the form of interviews or editorials.

Testimonies by scientific experts on the harmfulness of tobacco, declarations by political leaders in favour of controlling the use of tobacco and statements by show business or sports personalities in support of these messages can all be suggested. Celebrities could be invited to attend a press conference to facilitate their meeting with the media.

There is no lack of sources of information on this subject, especially in developed countries where large numbers of expert reports have been published in recent decades. ❑

Among the key points of the communication strategy, it may be helpful to issue a few reminders to the promoters of tobacco control activities:

- The messages designed for the media must be attractive and convincing enough to catch the attention of the journalist concerned. These criteria are also essential for ensuring that the reader, listener or viewer feels personally concerned.
- Communication on smoking through the media must continue over a long period. Challenging smoking behaviour is a long-term activity.
- It must be repeated frequently, through the media and by other forms of communication at the same time. It is important that the public should receive information from several sources and in different forms.
- The content of the messages must correspond to all the various forms of tobacco control activity being promoted simultaneously: education and information, limitation of consumption, and protection.
- The content must be adapted to the socio-cultural characteristics of the group for which the message is intended, to changes in behaviour and to changes in the arrangements for controlling and regulating the use of tobacco.
- Moreover, communication on smoking must elicit the participation of the target audience. It is essential for them to be able to become involved in drafting the messages, to express their own views or to enter into direct dialogue with experts. This formula helps to improve the way messages are understood and assimilated. All the opportunities offered through or at the instigation of the media deserve therefore to be encouraged, especially for the benefit of specific population groups and in the developing countries.
- Communication on this topic must take into account all the activities supported by the various organizations, committees, associations or other tobacco control movements. Coordination of such activities facilitates the use of the media to support the tobacco control programme in the most effective way.

HOW TO MOTIVATE THE MEDIA TO GET INVOLVED

Media support for tobacco control activities is sometimes not easily obtained. In some developing countries a too-weakly expressed political will may be reflected by the lack of educational and legislative action against smoking. In such cases, the epidemiological data on the prevalence of consumption and its impact on the death rate may not be enough to make the media realize the urgency of the situation and motivate them to give their full support to control activities. Moreover, editors are subjected to pressure from the tobacco industry as a provider of advertising revenue, and this is a major obstacle to the commitment of the media to support the tobacco control programme.

In order to persuade the media to take an interest in preventing smoking, it is necessary to be familiar with the way they work and with the constraints they face in meeting the expectations of their audience. Taking their specific needs into account will help to foster a relationship of trust conducive to dialogue. A face-to-face meeting is therefore a prerequisite for getting to know each other better.

The media are naturally concerned with what their public wants. Their survival now depends on their promptness in meeting the public's needs. Being first with the news is a sign of efficacy. Information must therefore be provided as quickly as possible. It has to be in keeping with the general public interest or must concern a particular audience.

The information must be relevant and adapted to the characteristics of the audience. This first stage has to be carefully prepared. Information concerning current political, medical or social affairs must be full and credible. The sources must be specified so as to guarantee the reliability of the facts and make it easier to carry out investigations to enable journalists to tackle the subject from a specific angle according to their audience.

The forms of approach to the media must be appropriate to the type of medium concerned — television, radio or press — to its specialist area and frequency, to the timing in relation to current affairs (election periods should be avoided, whereas media coverage at the time of a parliamentary debate on social expenditure may be productive). They should be attractive in order to catch the attention of journalists who are faced each day with a large volume of information.

Some ideas for activities liable to provoke media reaction could be considered:

- Make the media fully aware of what has been achieved through tobacco control activities. Present all the aspects of tobacco use (psychological, sociological, economic) in a clear, precise and unambiguous manner, and give priority to local information that is of more immediate interest to the public.

◆ Make available to the media the results of surveys showing the very strong support of public opinion for measures restricting the use of tobacco.

Surveys carried out in many countries where tobacco control information campaigns are regularly organized concern the banning of cigarette advertising, higher taxes on tobacco, and a general ban on smoking in public places.

■ A "Eurobarometer" survey, carried out in October 1991 among 12 800 people of 15 years or over in the 12 Member States of the European Community, confirms the results of a previous survey carried out in March-April 1987: 73% of the persons questioned were in favour of legislation banning all forms of advertising, direct or indirect, of tobacco products. These findings were reconfirmed in a fresh survey in 1992, when 74% of the respondents were in favour of such a ban.

■ In Belgium, a survey of 613 people in July 1991 showed that 75% of women and 66% of men were opposed to the sponsorship of sports events by the tobacco industry.

■ A large percentage of French people are in favour of an increase in taxes on tobacco as a way of discouraging young people from taking up smoking: 45% of those interviewed (up to 75% when it is explained that such an increase actually does discourage young people from smoking).

In many countries, various restrictive measures on the use of tobacco have been adopted following findings that demonstrate the public's preference for some smoke-free flights and restaurants, and other non smoking public establishments. Recent examples concern Aer Lingus, British Airways, British Midland, Air Canada and Cathay Pacific.

◆ Publicize examples of pressure exerted by the tobacco industry on a major newspaper on account of the tobacco control campaign, showing that such pressure infringes the freedom of the press.

Such articles, skilfully presented by journalists known for their competence and integrity, especially by their peers, are likely to influence media that are aware of the ethical aspects of their profession.

◆ Create a media lobby on tobacco advertising.

This is the solution the promoters of the tobacco control campaign are endeavouring to reach. Successful experiments of this kind in Canada, the United States of America or Australia need to be very widely encouraged, for the sake of the media themselves.

■ In Canada, a press campaign was organized by the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA) in 1984 to persuade the press not to collaborate in tobacco advertising. Through these efforts and those of the Canadian Cancer Society, several newspapers decided to refuse advertising, following the example of the *Kingston Whig-Standard* and the *Toronto Globe and Mail.*

◆ Write letters to editors denouncing the inconsistencies or harmful consequences of tobacco advertising for young people, for example; this is a way of making the media more aware of the acuteness of the public health problem.

■ In June 1993, the American daily *The Seattle Times* decided that it would no longer accept tobacco advertising following the publication in its columns of a letter to the editor drawing the attention of the newspaper's management to the malpractices and the duplicitous nature of these advertising messages which are targeted particularly at young people.

◆ Suggest to the media that they exert pressure on the public authorities to obtain financial compensation in return for refusing cigarette advertising. For some publications this is a matter of survival. Experience shows the need to seek solutions that will lead to a general consensus.

■ In France, for example, in February 1993, four months after the entry into force of tobacco control legislation, a number of French publications appealed to politicians to reconsider the provisions of the "Evin law" restricting advertising of tobacco and alcohol. A few months later, on the occasion of World No-Tobacco Day, the Minister of Health announced that the Government was considering allocating 1% of the taxes on tobacco to offset the loss of revenue by the media.

The Australian state of Victoria has adopted a system whereby 5% of the taxes levied on the wholesale price of tobacco products is allocated to setting up the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. The Foundation's funds have been used to take over completely the tobacco industry's sponsorship of 12 different sports and to sponsor opera, ballet and the visual arts.

◆ Making known a celebrity's views in favour of banning tobacco advertising can catch media attention.

■ A Swedish magazine for advertising professionals, *Résumé* (No. 6/1993), has come out in favour of a ban on tobacco advertising. "Should tobacco advertising be banned? Most of us (advertising professionals) instinctively reply "no" to this question. I tend to feel that this reply is wrong and that it is time for the profession to redefine its role". According to the editorial, the Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Mr Bo Koenberg, ought to have gone further in his recent draft law and imposed a ban on tobacco advertising. "We believe that such an initiative will have a positive effect on the tobacco control campaign. We ought to settle this matter now before we are forced to do so on joining the European Community". The journal's commitment has led to deeper discussion of this matter among the media in general. ❑

INTRODUCTION

Knowing how to make good use of the media is crucial to the success of all communication activities. The promoters of tobacco control must therefore develop this expertise in order to exploit to the full the opportunities offered by the media for delivery of their messages to the widest possible public or target groups.

In order to do this, they must know the needs of journalists and the characteristics of the particular media in which they work, and of their audience, and adapt their messages as appropriate.

Imperatives include the credibility of sources, and the relevance, speed of publication, and interest of the information for the general public or a particular group. The content of the message must be convincing and its presentation attractive.

Classification of the media will enable the most appropriate channels to be selected to meet the information needs of target groups. Selection is important in tobacco control, for which a strategy involving the whole range of the media is needed to be effective.

Classification of the media must take account of their characteristics

- The general information press deals with tobacco control in terms aimed at the broadest general public.
- The daily press, general news weeklies and radio and television networks.
- The specialized press for presentation of the subject in a particular light or for a particular target audience — medical journals, women's magazines, the economic and financial press, youth, leisure and sports magazines.

Company and professional associations' newsletters, and the publications and advertising of associations that include an editorial component should also be considered under this heading.

- The ratio of revenue from cigarette advertising to overall business turnover, and attitudes to tobacco control in terms of the number of times the topic is mentioned over a given period of time, may also be noted as indicators on the files on each media outlet.

What criteria should be used in selecting media?

Is the aim

- to make target groups aware of the harmful effects of tobacco or to inform the largest possible number of people through the media?
- to work at grassroots level, to promote better understanding of messages and get people to feel that the question concerns them?
- to instigate a debate with the tobacco industry in order to denounce pressures and inducements to smoking?

- to elicit reactions from the national or local authorities in support of tobacco control measures?

- to encourage involvement of the public, through radio or television discussions or other initiatives?

Other criteria for selection include the audience characteristics of the various media, their attitudes to tobacco control, knowledge of the subject, age, sex, educational level, sociocultural values and access to the media (illiteracy, cost, personal time available).

Audience research surveys among readers, listeners, or television viewers may provide some interesting results that should be taken into account in selection. These data reveal the size, expectations and sensitivities of the audience.

The nature of the information to be communicated is also important in selection. It may concern a novelty, a scientific discovery, the result of a lawsuit against the tobacco industry which the tobacco control lobby would particularly wish to publicize, or a debate of substance. The choice will then depend on how effectively the information is treated and how quickly it is conveyed to the audience in question.

The selection of media may also be determined by the approach that has been decided. If advertising space is being bought, certain media are more suitable than others. This method carries messages in their integral form, in the desired graphic presentation, at specific times, intervals and dates, to a selected target audience.

This approach may strengthen the awareness of one section of the population and be used to follow up a particular campaign, local activities or concerted actions aimed at that particular audience. In this case, links are established with advertisers rather than journalists.

Finally, the commitment of particular journalists to tobacco control and the time they are prepared to devote to this programme may also be factors in selecting a particular press organ.

■ In certain countries, like Canada, it is possible to obtain free media slots for the transmission of messages through phone-ins or community advertising in the newspapers and electronic media. Such advertisements are free of charge, demand little energy or skills and are usually very effective. Depending on which media are used, a short, concise and precise text (or a short telephone or studio interview) will suffice to put across a message.

Opening routes of access to the media

Routes of access to the media depend on the nature of the information to be disseminated, communication strategy objectives in the particular setting and the characteristics of the particular media chosen. These are not exclusive — there may be simultaneous interventions from several angles around a central topic, or to bring different facets of the tobacco problem before different audiences, as may be of interest.

The communication strategies most often used are:

- press releases
- press kits
- preparation of additional notes
- press conferences
- individual contacts
- advertising campaigns
- readers' letters
- meetings with editorial boards
- preparation of feature articles for publication in newspapers

Choice may be based on an approach using the following indicative questions:

- Is the information new and original, with obvious interest for the press in terms of the criteria mentioned above — topical, useful to the public or likely to evoke a reaction?

  A press release or press conference will be justified.

- Have there recently been several press releases on the tobacco issue? Which angles have been most fully developed? How is the question generally approached with the media?

  A press conference may offer the opportunity for an update with the specialists and personalities concerned.

- In view of the importance or complexity of the information to be carried, will explanations, witness accounts or answers to pointed questions be required?

  Here again, a press conference may be better than a press release.

- Is the tobacco issue giving rise to controversy, in terms of a general ban on advertising or restrictions on cigarette smoking, under pressure from interested parties (smokers and non-smokers, public authorities, the tobacco industry, distributors and the media, which are sometimes opposed to any form of ban, either on principle or out of interest)?

  A live television or radio debate with representatives of all these parties may facilitate expression of their respective views. The introduction of pluralism, controversy and a "duel between adversaries" offers an additional attraction to the public.

  Phone-in debates or any other arrangements that allow the public to join in the discussion can also be recommended.

- Are the media particularly hostile to a ban on cigarette advertising, by which they will be the first to be affected? It could then be suggested that they try to obtain compensation from the public authorities. This might be an excellent topic for investigation by journalists, who would thus be drawn into the heart of the tobacco control debate.

  A press conference to explain to journalists what is at stake in the strategy may then be recommended.

- Does the nature of the information justify a dramatic splash? Does it concern the results of a lawsuit against the tobacco industry, condemnation of inducements to the young to take up smoking, sponsorship of adolescent sports activities, or backing the government against pressures from industry?

  A press conference for journalists to meet with the key protagonists, together with a press release, may be the best vehicle for this information.

- Does the dissemination of scientific or medical data related to smoking, or the presentation of expert reports or conclusions of international conferences call for comments from the personalities involved, to give greater weight to a statement or emphasize an angle on the topic that may arouse public reaction? Is the establishment of a pressure group or some other initiative being announced, such as a foundation or committee against smoking?

A press conference to facilitate direct contacts for interviews or the collection of further information is appropriate here.

These few examples illustrate the variety of situations that must be taken into account and to which communication strategies must be adapted. The interest and density of the information, the time factor, and the resources available, will thus determine the choice of routes of access to the media.

Choosing the time

The issue of tobacco control needs to be kept permanently in the eye of the media and of public opinion. A communication programme will ensure a continuous supply of information in step with certain determining factors, such as planned events.

In preparing a communication programme, a number of factors that will help to make better use of the media in support of tobacco control in conditions of optimal efficacy must therefore be taken into account.

1. What major political or other events are scheduled for the coming year? Are they likely to monopolize media attention? Or could they also serve to stimulate public interest in the topic?

   Events such as a medical conference on lung diseases, a public information initiative on heart disease, a special week on the prevention of cancer or other smoking-related diseases provide opportunities for tobacco control intervention in the media to keep the attention of the public and reinforce these messages.

2. Have communication activities also been planned by other partners in public health?

3. Will the results of preparatory surveys be available in time? Will the chosen dates allow time for definition of the strategy to be followed, the image to be conveyed, the message to be carried and the mode of communication? Will the budget cover the activities planned for a given period?

4. Any events likely to attract journalists and focus their attention on the campaign against smoking should be exploited. Emphasis should be given to the topical theme of the event. The type of news items usually reported in the press may be linked up with some point of information relevant to tobacco control and given a new slant. Political decisions, a new therapy, an important statement by a public figure, recent epidemiological findings, the inauguration of a foundation to combat smoking-related diseases, the outcome of a lawsuit against the tobacco industry, the announcement of an impending trial of strength — or World No-Tobacco Day — are such examples.

In Bangladesh, the commitment announced by the public authorities on World No-Tobacco Day as a result of the dynamic action of a national NGO, ADHUNIK, mobilized support from the media for the promotion of tobacco control activities. Political leaders were also moved to react. Their support spurred the adoption of major tobacco control decisions on World No-Tobacco Day in 1991. That year, religious leaders also acted in complement to the media by relaying information to the illiterate and the poor sectors of the population with no access to the written, radio or television press.

An innovative idea of the Information Centre of the Association for the Prevention of Smoking (CIPRET) in Geneva, Switzerland, has been widely welcomed in the press. It has decided to sponsor a motor cycle rider for the 1993 Grand Prix. When tobacco advertising on racing circuits is being banned in several countries, this original initiative may open the way to a new departure in the field of sport. The Geneva Federation for the Prevention of Alcoholism (FEGPA) has joined in supporting this operation, which has also aroused interest in political circles. The objective is to reach young people through the sport of motor cycling which symbolizes calculated risk-taking, discipline and a certain dynamism. Here is the proof that there is an alternative to conventional sponsorship that will work in support of public health.

5. The promoters of tobacco control activities can even create an event that will mobilize journalists on this issue. (*See box*)

Other initiatives could be sponsored under the banner of nonsmoking, such as cultural or sports events, marathons, football matches, exhibitions, competitions, festivals ...

6. Finally, journalists need to be informed when press conferences are held for special occasions. If journalists are sent a full press kit on the smoking problem a few days before the event, they will be able to assess its importance. The interest of encounters between the worlds of science and politics must be stressed, so that decision-makers are not allowed to think that they already have sufficient information. They must also be supplied with suitable documents, statements, articles and photos.

Meeting the needs of journalists

In order to meet the needs of journalists, it is important to know what they want. Points to remember include the following:

- Journalists are interested in the novelty of information. This must be borne in mind in any approach. They must also be able to obtain confirmation or further details from the most authoritative and credible sources in the shortest possible time.
- Requests for interviews or information must be satisfied at any time. It is essential to include the name, address and telephone number of one or more people to contact for further information at the end of every press release.
- Technical fact sheets, general documentation on smoking, the results of surveys and opinion polls, and photos of public figures should be kept permanently available.
- The media are inundated with press releases, so that short, sharp messages are easier to retain and exploit. The use of appropriate photos to illustrate an article attracts the attention of readers.
- Care must be taken to ensure that tobacco control messages are conveyed in a way that enables journalists to do their job properly. ❑

MASTERING THE TECHNIQUES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is one of the two major functions of the health professions, together with the capacity to resolve problems. For advocates of tobacco control, the ability to communicate is crucial to the success of their activities. Acting both as carriers of messages to the media and as direct communicators, it is essential that they should be competent in the most common forms of communication, i.e. radio, television, the written press and the various other methods by which messages are carried, such as posters, films, theatre and marionettes.

Radio

Radio reaches the widest audience of all forms of mass communication. It is accessible to the greatest numbers because of the fact that its messages can be heard and understood by the illiterate, its considerable flexibility as a tool, its relatively moderate cost and its great linguistic flexibility.

As well as radio news bulletins, discussions, scientific broadcasts and documentaries aimed at the general public can be used for tobacco control advocacy.

The type of programmes selected will depend on the nature of the information, whether it is topical, a chance or predictable occurrence, and the general characteristics of the programme. The audience that will be reached obviously varies depending on the programme and the time of the broadcast.

Local radio is a prime example of communication at the grassroots level. The generally very practical hints on everyday life broadcast by these radios gain them the confidence of their listeners, who appreciate the service they provide.

In short, radio possesses outstanding powers of expression and enormous potential for promoting changes in attitude. It excels in the transmission of immediate information. It is present everywhere, establishing a private and intimate relationship with its listeners, and adapting to their mood.

In many developing countries, radio is the most important means of communication. In Africa, where the oral tradition is still largely predominant, radio is obviously a particularly potent means of arousing the broadest possible interest in the harmful effects of tobacco.

Television

Television is also a powerful medium for dissemination of information to mass audiences and enjoys unrivalled prestige to support and enhance the credibility of messages. The combination of pictures with sound is an essential factor in the effectiveness of this mode of communication.

It is widely accessible, especially in the developed countries. Moreover, the ban on cigarette advertising on television in several countries has helped to make this medium a particularly effective ally against smoking. In developing countries, its cost and a variety of other logistic and cultural problems are an obstacle to universal availability.

The written press

The written press offers many advantages for the transmission of tobacco control messages. In particular, it is the means most likely to be effective in reaching target groups. The combination of words with visual elements enables the text to be easily read and under-

stood. Weekly and monthly magazines can develop the subject in greater depth and transcend the immediacy of a news item.

The written word is accessible to a more limited audience than radio and television, in view of the fact that illiteracy is widespread in the developing world and not negligible in the developed countries. Other factors, such as poverty and lack of time, also limit accessibility.

Posters

The advantage of this mode of communication is that messages remain on permanent display. Visual elements are combined with words used to convey an idea and reinforce at street level the tobacco control slogans and concepts that are disseminated in the media.

They can be flexibly used in a wide variety of places, and the display of posters in facilities for recreation, sport or culture facilitates the receivability of the message. Posters are particularly appropriate in places where the accessibility of the conventional media is limited by illiteracy and poverty.

Video films

Films, videos, clips and slides are highly appreciated vehicles for tobacco control messages as they can so easily be adapted to their audience. The target audience and objectives to be achieved must be clearly defined when these media are used. Innovative audiovisual creation in support of tobacco control advocacy should be encouraged. Competitions, listings of the best audiovisual films in the field of health, and festivals of films on education for health could be organized.

Theatre and marionettes

Plays, puppets, songs, stories and dance are all effective vehicles for tobacco control messages to sectors of the population that are often difficult to reach by conventional means. Their effectiveness will depend on the extent to which cultural and socioeconomic audience factors are taken into account. These media are *a priori* easier to use in practice and broadly accessible to the less developed countries.

Many people, however, need to explore their feelings, experience emotions, question their own attitudes, and compare themselves with others to reassess their ideas and hence their behaviour. Forms such as plays, puppet shows, songs, stories and dance meet the needs of this type of public. They provoke emotions, and especially laughter, a technique that is especially effective in lowering the natural defences people usually put up when any reference is made to their own

Audiovisual productions in Europe: spotlight on tobacco

The panel of judges of the European Education for Health Film Festival held in Royan from 7 to 9 October 1992, brought the tobacco issue into the open. The grand trophy was awarded to the film of the French campaign "Fumer, c'est pas ma nature" [Smoking is not for me] made by the Ministry of Health, the National Sickness Insurance Fund and the French Committee on Education for Health, and an honourable mention was awarded by the judges to "Free Generation", a film made by the Commission of the European Communities in the context of the "Europe against Cancer" programme. The objective of this festival, open to health education facilitators and professionals, was clearly to identify and reward the best audiovisual productions on health in the 12 countries of the European Community, and, at the same time, to draw up a list of recommendations. Of the 300 productions that were viewed, 92 were entered for the festival.

habits. They are excellent vehicles for grassroots action against smoking aimed at target groups, such as school children, or audiences that are difficult to reach by other means of communication.

African countries have strong folk communication traditions that have proven useful in conveying messages which promote healthy lifestyles. Thousands of storytellers and traditional musicians are regularly drawn into health promotion activities in all countries. Theatrical shows, dancing and songs are increasingly used to transmit messages on the prevention of AIDS.

In India, at the Regional Cancer Centre in Trivandrum, the young students involved in social service projects are being trained, along with their teachers, in the methods of education against tobacco used in the rural area of Kerala. They have been given a brochure on the subject and have produced their own materials with artists in the community. In the case of chewing tobacco, their efforts have been particularly encouraging.

In Indonesia, the puppet theatre, or dalangs, give Chinese shadow pantomimes that include health education messages based on the legends of Ramayana Mahabharata.

In Nepal, sketches and puppet shows are also used to convey health messages.

In China, in the Province of Shanxi, a programme to encourage peasants to quit smoking has been launched, using traditional songs, videos and posters.

In Bangladesh, a traditional song contest on the theme of the dangers of tobacco was organized by the tobacco control association, ADHUNIK, in August 1992, in Dhaka. This mode of communication that is very popular in rural areas is of crucial importance to raise awareness among those people who can neither read nor write. ❑

EVALUATION

Advocates of tobacco control must be able to verify the relevance of their actions to the attainment of objectives, supervise the conditions in which they are implemented and identify the difficulties encountered.

Analysis of "what works or doesn't work" is essential to improve strategies, adjust the content of messages, review procedures for access to the media, look critically at the media chosen, gain deeper understanding of target audiences, and generally adapt resources and methods.

Evaluation of a communication activity in this field of tobacco control should aim:

- to assess the efficacy of the strategy of message dissemination in the media;
- to measure the impact of the messages on the behaviour of the public.

Evaluation is thus essential to the long-term success of the strategy. Review of experience with hindsight can improve message transmission in the interest:

- of the public, which is inclined to take more account of the harmful effects of tobacco habits on health;
- and of the media, now better prepared to respond to the expectations of their readers, listeners or viewers. ❑

FUTURE WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAYS

WHO sees future World No-Tobacco Days as opportunities, not only to ask people to stop smoking for one day, but also to initiate research on specific themes, publish information and initiate action.

If you have enjoyed reading this information for World No-Tobacco Day 1994: **"The media and tobacco: getting the health message across"**, perhaps you can help us prepare the next edition of the advisory kit by sending material which could be the basis of our text. The theme for World No-Tobacco Day 1995 is:

"The economics of tobacco control"

LET'S MAKE THE PREPARATION FOR WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY A GLOBAL ENDEAVOUR!

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